



**Question: What kind of job did the disciples have before they met Jesus?**

**Answer:** “As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:18-19)

The Galilee region, part of the Northern half of the present day country of Israel has been known throughout history for its fishing industry and rare species of fish. Lake Kenneret, or more commonly the Sea of Galilee is a body of fresh water roughly 13 miles long and about 7.5 miles wide fed primarily by the Jordan River that flows into the Northern most point of the sea. The sea actually sits 700 feet below sea level! During the disciple’s life, the region around the Sea of Galilee was dotted with fishing towns. These towns were particularly concentrated in the Northern portion of the sea where several fresh water springs fed the Sea of Galilee with nutrient rich water that fish flocked to for food. It is no coincidence that Capernaum, the town where Peter lived, was located on the Northern shore of the sea where the fish would have been the most densely populated. Fishermen like Peter used nets for fishing. The reason for nets is that the majority of fish in the sea are filter feeders that feed on plankton. If you were to cast a hook with a worm into the water you likely would only catch a few species of carp. Carp are forbidden to eat according to Jewish custom because they don’t have scales (see Leviticus 11:10 or Deuteronomy 14:10). The fish that the disciples would have caught with the aid of nets would have been the *amnun* or nurse fish (*am* = nurse, *nun* = fish), and the renowned St. Peter’s fish. The St. Peter’s fish got its name from Matthew 17:24-27. The verses have Jesus telling Peter to cast a single line into the water after they are unable to pay the temple tax that the tax collector asks for. When Peter catches a fish he is told by Jesus to open its mouth. There Peter finds a coin to pay the temple tax for both him and Jesus!