

Eremos Cave and the Storm on the Sea of Galilee

Lecture: 02-26 Lecture: Eremos Cave and the Storm on the Sea of Galilee | Israel 2026

SITE OVERVIEW

Location: A cave on the hillside above Capernaum (Tabgha area), northern shore of the Sea of Galilee — identified as the Eremos (solitary place)

Date of Visit: Not explicitly stated

Biblical References:

- Mark 1:35 — “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”
- Matthew 14:13 — “When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.”

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

A 3rd-century Spanish pilgrim named Egeria visited the site and recorded in her journal that a cave on the hillside above Tabgha was the location where Jesus ascended and preached the Beatitudes

The Chapel of the Beatitudes is situated directly above this cave site

The site is proposed as the regular prayer retreat of Jesus during his Capernaum ministry period

Egeria’s journal serves as one of the earliest pilgrimage records describing the physical landscape of the region

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Catholic archaeologist Bar Gil Pixner lived at Tabgha for several years and used Egeria’s journal as a geographic guide to locate the cave

Pixner’s search identified this as the only cave along the entire northern shore of the Sea of Galilee

The cave's singularity and its correspondence with Egeria's description form the primary physical evidence linking it to the biblical Eremos

⚠️ [Speculative] The identification of this specific cave as Jesus' prayer site is a proposed interpretation, not an archaeologically verified certainty

DR. SCHILLING'S KEY POINTS

The Greek word eromos (spelled E-R-E-M-O-S by Dr. Schilling), typically translated "solitary place," may function as a proper noun — a specific, named location Jesus habitually visited, rather than a generic descriptor

Three converging lines of evidence support the site identification:

1. Egeria's 3rd-century pilgrim journal
2. Bar Gil Pixner's archaeological field search
3. The scriptural text of Mark 1:35 and Matthew 14:13

Jesus' departure point in Mark 1:35 is identified as Peter's house in Capernaum

Dr. Schilling argues Jesus used this cave as a regular, nightly retreat for prayer with the Father, particularly given the intensity of his Galilean ministry

The walking-on-water narrative (referenced but not directly cited by chapter and verse) includes the detail that Jesus waited six to eight hours while the disciples struggled in the storm before intervening — used as a pastoral teaching point on divine timing

The text states Jesus "intended to walk past them" but responded when they called out — noted as a detail shared earlier by a group member named Ben

Correction of common assumption: Jesus' delayed intervention in the storm is not abandonment but deliberate, proximate availability

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Site is located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, above Tabgha, below the Chapel of the Beatitudes

Capernaum is situated along the same shoreline — Jesus' base of ministry and residence during the Galilean period

The Golan Heights lies to the left (east) of the site as viewed from the cave

Meteorological note: Cold air descending from the Golan Heights meets warm air over the lake, producing sudden, severe storms with no advance warning — the Shakkiah winds (spelled S-H-A-K-K-I-A-H by Dr. Schilling)

In March 1992, Shakkiah winds produced a storm generating 10-foot waves that caused significant destruction to shops in downtown Tiberias

The cave's location above the shoreline, away from population centers, makes it a plausible refuge from the crowds that followed Jesus throughout Capernaum

QUOTABLE MOMENTS

"I'm suggesting to you that 'solitary place' is not just a word, it's a proper name, and this is it."

"Jesus doesn't always show up in the immediate like we'd like him to... but he's close enough that when it's time, he'll come and meet whatever that need happens to be."

"Jesus spent all night with his Father. His mission was so great, the pressure was so intense, that he needed that filling every day."

"He was close enough that when they called out to him, he came to their rescue."

PERSONAL NOTES

Follow up: Locate and review Egeria's *Itinerarium* (3rd-century pilgrim journal) for her precise description of the Tabgha cave — important primary source

Research Bar Gil Pixner's published works on Tabgha and the northern Galilee shoreline for the full archaeological argument

Confirm correct Greek spelling and lexical range of ἔρημος (eremos) — Dr. Schilling's argument that it functions as a proper noun warrants further linguistic investigation

The site is described as rarely visited and not on standard tour routes — worth noting for future site planning

Dr. Schilling's personal car accident anecdote (location: Perrysburg, Ohio, approximately 2:00 a.m.) was used as a pastoral illustration of immediate divine response — not historically relevant to the site but notable as a teaching device

Witness corroboration of the accident story referenced: group member named Brian

Question for follow-up: What is the current preservation or accessibility status of the cave? Is it formally protected?