

Called to Disrupt

The Beginning of the Good News

Recalling the Prologue

- **Roman Empire:** a decade of instability, with foreign war, rebellions, the Great Fire of Rome, persecution of Christians, a coup, and a year with four emperors (69 AD).
- **Palestine:** decades of unrest, pressure to worship the imperial cult, rise of militant Zealotry, esp. in the north, war with Rome, civil war among Jewish factions; pressure on Christian Jews to embrace violence against Rome
- Announcement of the Good News of the Messiah, God's Son
- Elijah's return, signaling the Day of the Lord had come: **prepare for judgment and deliverance**
- Jesus anointed, tested, and inaugurates God's kingdom - **all in the wilderness, not the Temple**

The Social Order in Ancient Palestine

- Not **individualism**, but **dyadism**: one sees oneself as always interrelated to others in a distinct social position, seen both horizontally and vertically —> **a value of human hierarchy**
- State-controlled agricultural production in which the elite (1) extracted any surplus through **tribute** and **controlled the exchange of goods** ==> **subsistence life** for peasants
- **Temple**: stockpiled surplus; redistributed to artisan class and elites; **controlled access to God**; Pharisaic critique emphasized purity **named many non-elites as unworthy**
- Consolidation of land => **day laborers** and **tenant farming**; massive **building projects** for imperial cult and tribute management
- **Tax farming**: leased out tax collecting rights
- Aristocracy: <0.5%; artisans and bureaucrats <8%

“The Galilean peasant found himself in the rather strange position that those very people to whom he felt bound by ties of national and religious loyalty, the priestly aristocracy, were in fact his social oppressors.”

—Sean Freyne, *The World of the New Testament*

After John was arrested, Jesus
came into Galilee announcing
God's good news,

Mark 1:14–15

CEB

saying, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

Mark 1:14–15

CEB

Jesus Did Not Do the Expected

- Did not recruit retired Roman or Jewish soldiers
- Did not summon Oath Keepers or Proud Boys
- Did not initiate his own band of Zealots
- Instead, he gathered folks just like him into a fellowship

As Jesus passed alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” he said, “and I’ll show you how to fish for people.” Right away, they left their nets and followed him.

MARK 1:16–20

MARK

After going a little farther, he saw James and John, Zebedee's sons, in their boat repairing the fishing nets. At that very moment he called them. They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers.

MARK 2:13–14

MARK

Jesus went out beside the lake again. The whole crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he continued along, he saw Levi, Alphaeus' son, sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Levi got up and followed him



The Sea of Galilee



Nazareth

Cana

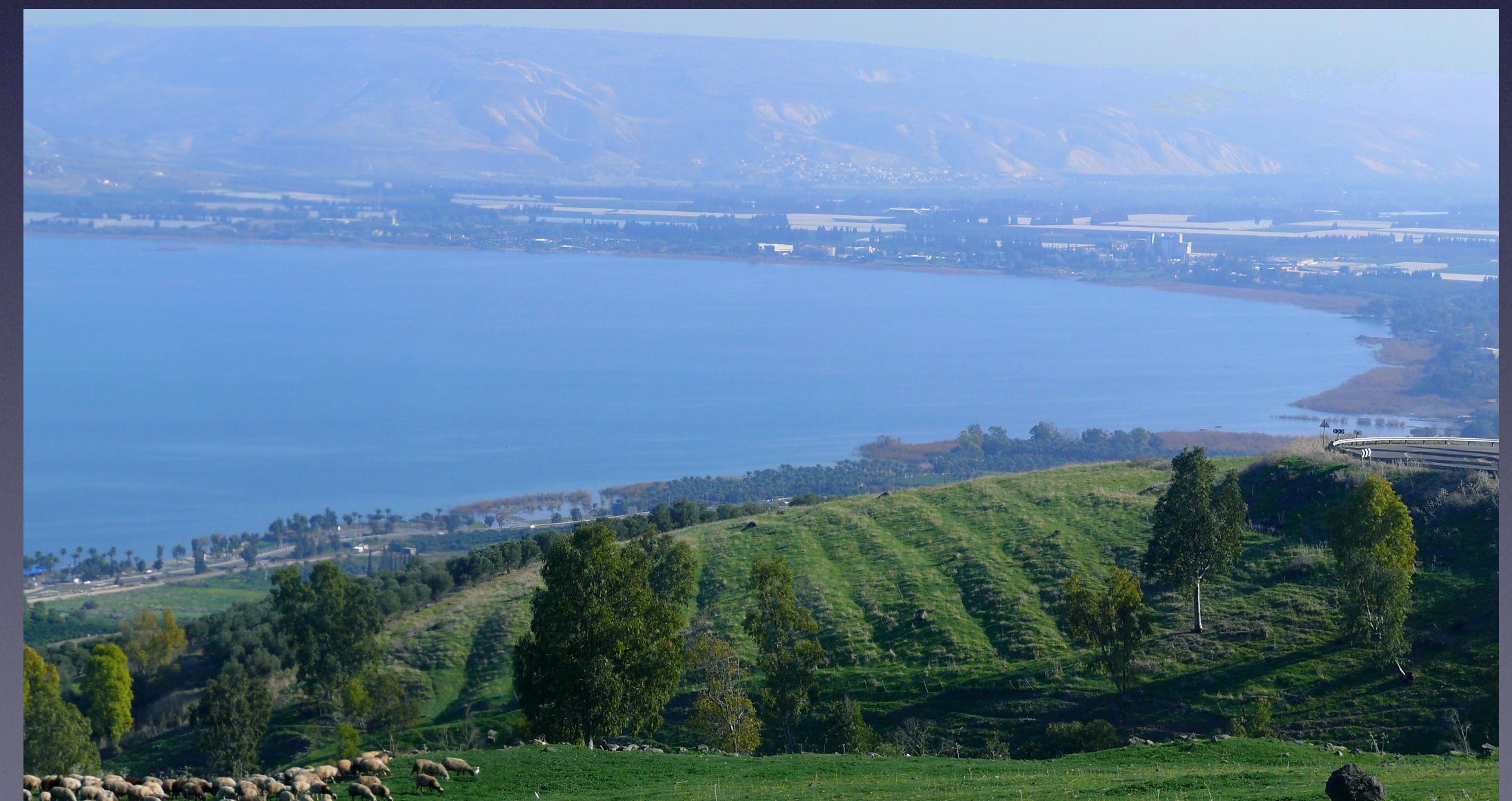
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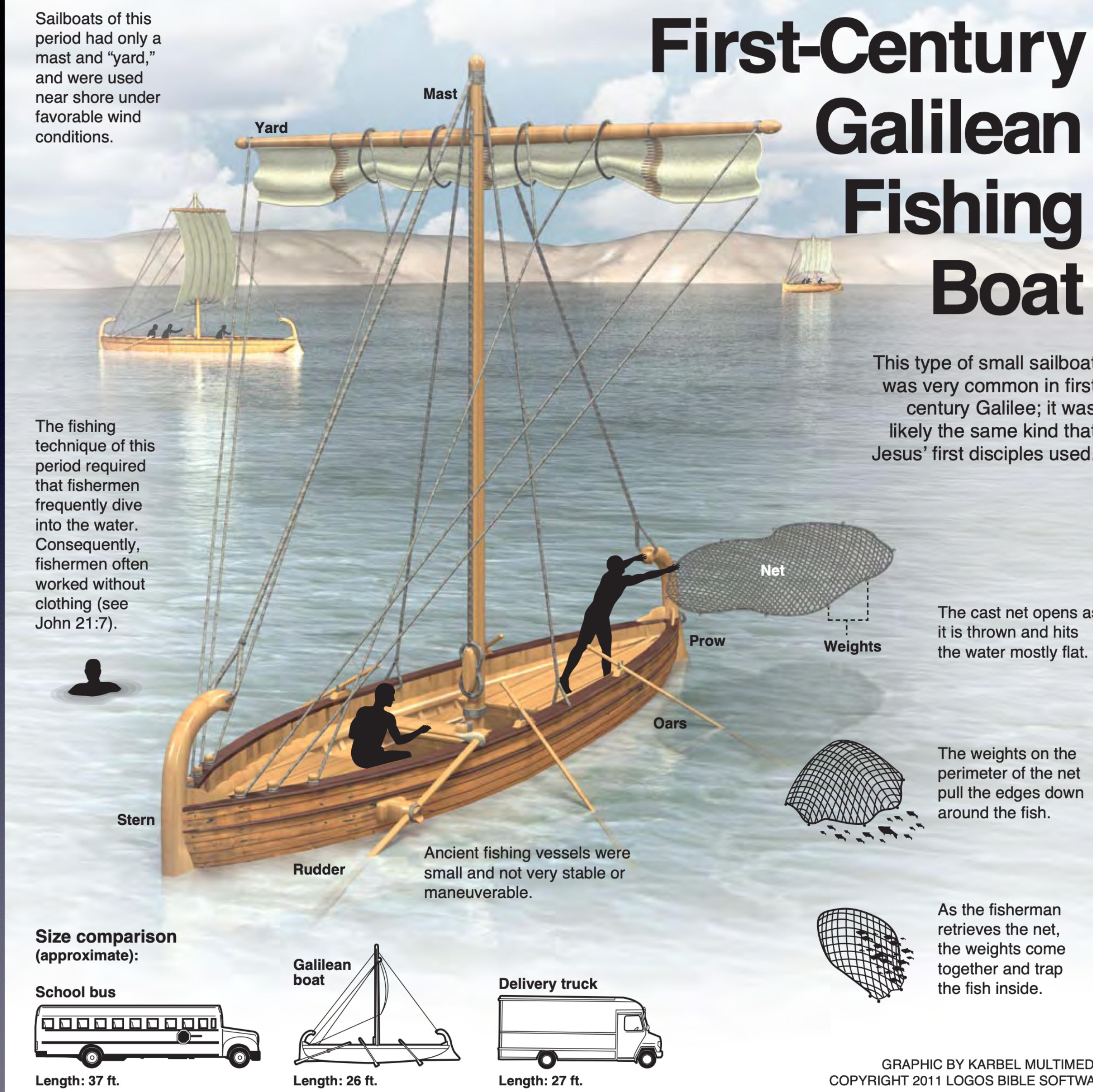
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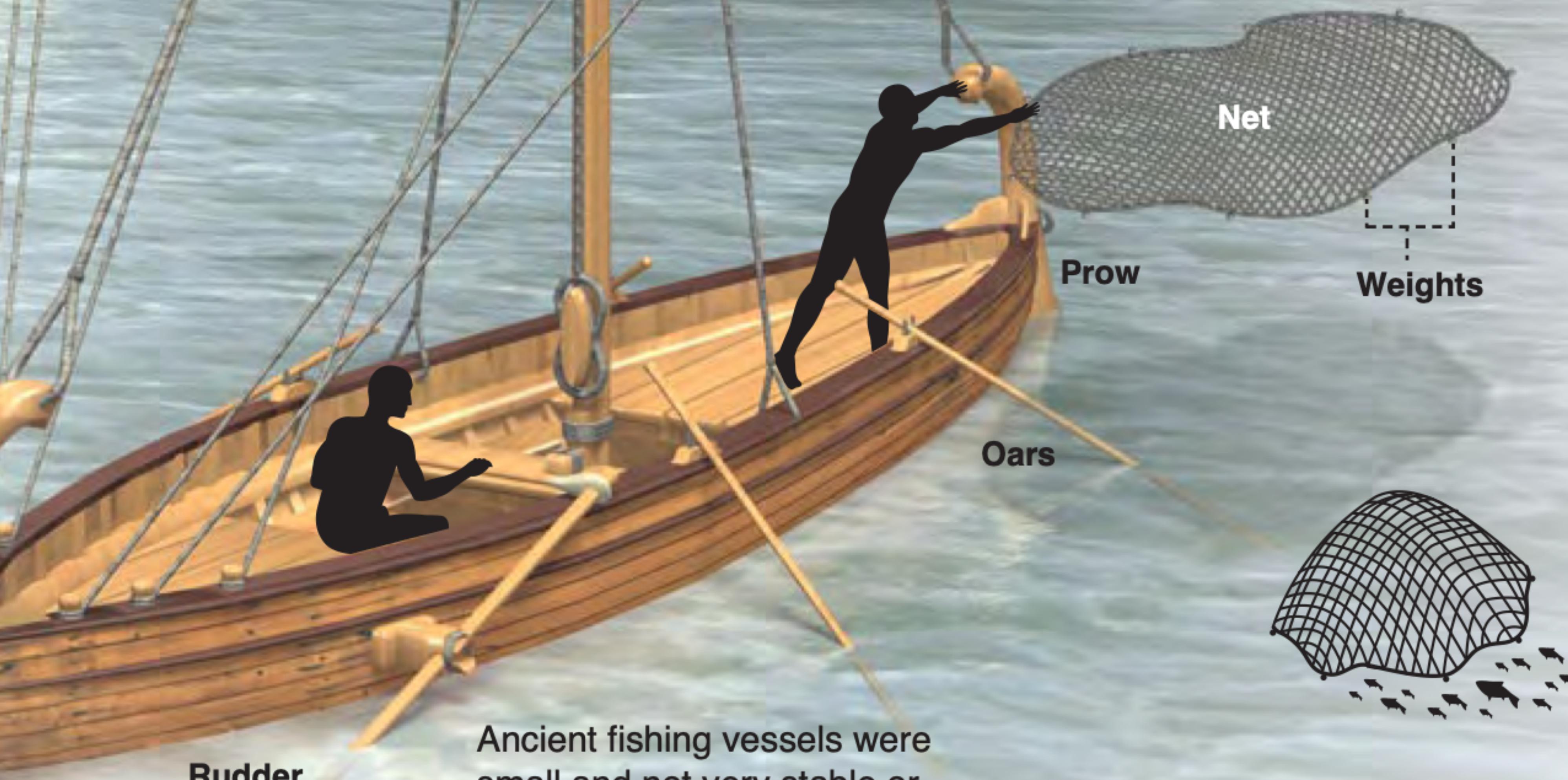
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G A L I L E E



First-Century Galilean Fishing Boat





Ancient fishing vessels were small and not very stable or maneuverable.

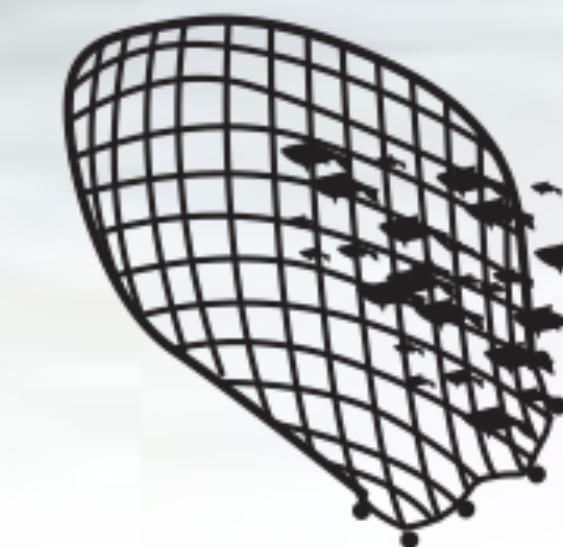


Delivery truck

The cast net opens as it is thrown and hits the water mostly flat.



The weights on the perimeter of the net pull the edges down around the fish.



As the fisherman retrieves the net, the weights come together and trap the fish inside.

Fishers of humans?

JEREMIAH 16:14–18

JEREMIAH

But the time is coming, declares the LORD, when no one will say, "As the LORD lives who brought up the Israelites from the land of Egypt"; instead, they will say, "As the LORD lives who brought up the Israelites from the land of the north and from all the lands where he has banished them." I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

JEREMIAH 16:14–18

JEREMIAH

I'm going to send hordes of fishermen to catch them, declares the LORD. Afterward I will send a party of hunters to hunt them down on every mountain, hill, and cave. I am watching their every move; not one is hidden from me. Nor is their sin concealed from my sight. I will initially pay them back double for their evil and sin, because they have corrupted my land with their disgusting, lifeless idols and have filled my inheritance with their detestable practices.

Hear this word, you cows
of Bashan, who are on
Mount Samaria, who
cheat the weak,

AMOS 4:1–3

AMOS

who crush the needy, who
say to their husbands,
“Bring drinks, so we can
get drunk!”

AMOS 4:1–3

AMOS

The LORD God has
solemnly promised by his
holiness: The days are
surely coming upon you,

when they will take
you away with hooks,
even the last one of you
with fishhooks.

You will go out through
the broken wall, each one
after another; and you will
be flung out into Harmon,

“Fishers of Humans” in Scripture

- Recruited by YHWH: **judgment is the first step in our deliverance**
- **Jeremiah**: Deliver us from our idolatry and detestable practices
- **Ezekiel**: Deliver us from false kings and their parasites who demand we worship false gods along
- **Amos**: Deliver us from the elite who oppress the helpless and crush the poor, who insist on **a value of human hierarchy** and can't be bothered to care about those beneath their station

EZEKIEL 29:3–5

EZEKIEL

I'm against you,
Pharaoh, Egypt's king,
great crocodile lurking
in the Nile's canals,

who says, “The Nile is all
mine;
I made it for myself!”
I will set hooks in your
jaws;

EZEKIEL 29:3–5

EZEKIEL

I will make the fish
from the Nile's canals
cling to your scales.

I will drag you out of the
Nile's canals,

EZEKIEL 29:3–5

EZEKIEL

and also all the fish
from the Nile's canals
clinging to your scales.
I will fling you out into
the desert,

EZEKIEL 29:3–5

EZEKIEL

and also all the fish from
the Nile's canals. You will
fall on the open ground,
and won't be gathered or
retrieved.

MARK 2:13–14

MARK

Jesus went out beside the lake again. The whole crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he continued along, he saw Levi, Alphaeus' son, sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Levi got up and followed him

The Call of Levi (Matthew)

- Jesus called Levi, the tax collector, out of his vocation of exploiting the people for his own profit and into a new social practice

The Paradigmatic Response

So Elijah departed from there and found Elisha, Shaphat's son. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. Elisha was with the twelfth yoke. Elijah met up with him and threw his coat on him. Elisha immediately left the oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and my mother," Elisha said, "then I will follow you."

The Paradigmatic Response

- Simon & Andrew: “Right away, they left their nets and followed him.”
- James and John: “They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers.
- Levi: “Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Levi got up and followed him.”

MARK 10:23–25

MARK

Looking around, Jesus said to his disciples, “It will be very hard for the wealthy to enter God’s kingdom!” His words startled the disciples, so Jesus told them again, “Children, it’s difficult to enter God’s kingdom! It’s easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s kingdom.”

The First Step

- Jesus turns upside down the world of the disciple, destroying their carefully protected dichotomy between the personal and the political. *When we follow Jesus, **the personal and the political become one.***
- Jesus disrupts the existing social order by calling us to accept social and economic responsibility within our communities
- He does not call us “out” of the world, but into a new, transformative social practice.