

In true Barbara M. Britton fashion, this journey around the Sea of Galilee unearths the humanness of the people Jesus interacted with, and even the timeline of events that is easy to skim over.

I loved the insight and Scripture brought out in the devotional. I saw the compassion and love and tenderness of Jesus in an impactful way.

This book brought me to tears as I related with the people who met and served with Jesus.

The true mark of a Biblical Fiction is one that sends me to my Bible—what a perfect way to do that with a built-in devotional!

This crossover fiction + devotion is perfect for visual learners, as the stories come alive on page!

NAOMI CRAIG, BIBLICAL FICTION AUTHOR

Barbara M. Britton's book takes several stories from the Gospels concerning Jesus's travels around the Sea of Galilee. There are multiple fictional vignettes that place characters into the Gospel accounts in order to highlight the interpersonal relations of people that are peripheral to the Gospel narrative. Each story highlights the emotions and impacts of these fictional accounts. As an example, the woman with a chronic medical condition detailed in Mark 5:25-34 is given a name and her character is developed so as to show the likely emotional toll her illness had on her. Most vignettes have a section on the author's application for the story as well as some questions to help the reader understand the meaning of the text.

This book is designed to reach people early in their Christian walk, or those who are beginning to reach out to Jesus. The author's applications sections bring to bear Mrs. Britton's own life experiences and are certainly a highlight for each story in the book.

JAKE JACOBI, MASTER OF THEOLOGY,  
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

You'll be captivated as you journey with Barbara in her recent Bible study, *Across the Lake: Traveling with Jesus Around the Sea of Galilee*. She highlights stories of Jesus's miracles near the *Sea* by making them come to life with authentic, intriguing characters. From casting out demons, healing a woman who suffered for years, to feeding a large crowd, you'll be inspired as it feels like you're really following along with Jesus. Her own reflections about visiting Israel and the study questions make this a complete experience. I highly recommend this unique approach to Bible study—you'll be delighted and encouraged in your faith as you travel with her!

ANN M. COOK, COPY EDITOR FOR *JUST  
BETWEEN US* MAGAZINE

*Across the Lake: Traveling with Jesus Around the Sea of Galilee* brings the Gospels to life with thrilling, immersive narratives that keep you hanging on every sentence. The stories my mom has imagined offer fresh perspectives on Scripture, drawing us deeper into the world of Jesus's ministry with both wonder and faith.

REV. RICHARD BRITTON III, MDIV., PASTOR OF  
BECKWITH HILLS CHRISTIAN REFORMED  
CHURCH

Barbara M. Britton, who brought Biblical fiction to life with her Tribes of Israel series, has done it again with her *Across the Lake* Bible study. Here, we follow Jesus as He sails around the Sea of Galilee, performing miracles to reveal His purpose and God's glory. Through the eyes of those Jesus healed, their loved ones, and Simon Peter, we witness the marvelous accounts of Christ's mercy and grace. The book is an emotional read with thought-provoking questions after each vivid event. Biblically accurate, this study can be done with church groups, book clubs, or as your family devotion.

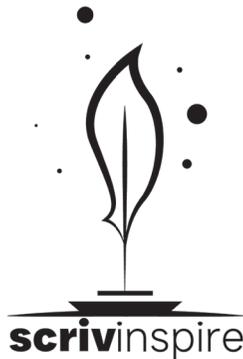
OLIVIA RAE, AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF  
THE SWORD AND THE CROSS SERIES



# ACROSS *the* LAKE

Traveling with Jesus Around the Sea of Galilee

**BARBARA M. BRITTON**



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*This book is dedicated to our family friend, Nancy Beckman, who invited my mom to a Bible study and introduced my whole family to Jesus.*



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*When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.*

*Mark 5:21 (NIV)*



# THE JOURNEY

I have never traveled to a more peaceful place than the region around the Sea of Galilee. Israel was not on my bucket list, so I was surprised, and a little hesitant, when my husband booked a trip to Israel for our thirty-fifth anniversary. I'm sure friends thought I was crazy about being half-hearted regarding the trip. My day job is writing Biblical Fiction about little-known Bible characters. Surely, I could find some stories to write about in Israel.

I set off on a jet with no story ideas in my brain. A few days later, as I lounged in a boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, I knew I had to write about this place where Jesus walked, and healed, and battled demons.

Jesus of Nazareth became Jesus of Capernaum. Capernaum is where Jesus lived during his three years of public ministry. The ruins of Peter's house can be found in Capernaum, and Jesus spent a lot of time with Peter, even healing his mother-in-law.

When you live by Lake Michigan, the Sea of Galilee is not that impressive. I equate the sea to one of the larger lakes near my house in Wisconsin. I could stand on the shoreline in Capernaum and see Magdala across the water. Granted, in the days without speed boats or vehicles, it took time to venture from place to place, especially when one walked or rowed a boat. Yet 60 percent of Jesus's miracles occurred

in this small region of Israel. For Jesus, this iconic area called Galilee was anything but boring.

I hope you enjoy discovering stories from the Bible that highlight the person of Jesus. A person who was truly God and truly man. Journey with me as I highlight some of His ministry around the Sea of Galilee, a sea that Jesus calls a lake.

# THE DISCIPLES AS LISTED IN MARK 3:16-19

- Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter
- James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John
- Andrew
- Philip
- Bartholomew
- Matthew
- Thomas
- James son of Alphaeus
- Thaddaeus
- Simon the Zealot
- Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him



*Part* **ONE**  
*Going to the Other Side*



Scripture Passage:  
**Mark 4:35-5:20**



# ONE

*They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.*

Mark 5:1-3

Felix tucked burlap-wrapped bread under his arm and climbed out the back bedroom window. His mother packed crates in the courtyard of their home for their move from Gerasa. In a few days, his uncle would arrive and escort them to the city of Rome. Felix didn't want to leave his home, but most of all, he didn't want to leave his father. If he could report to his mother that his father was still alive, she might delay their departure. Petitions to the Roman gods, Greek gods, even unnamed gods, had failed to bring his father home from the tombs and free him from the demons.

At twelve years old, Felix failed to earn enough money to support his mother and baby sister. If his father returned home, the life his family had enjoyed in the past would be restored. He yearned to try one last time to make that dream a reality, even though he hadn't seen his father in months.

Dusk descended quickly. A storm on the horizon pushed a gloomy

darkness toward the shore. Half a dozen pig farmers accompanied him on the path toward the sea. The men tending to the pigs paid no mind to the changing weather, or a boy hurrying toward the tombs. Their livestock swarmed the wide path, snorting and squealing as if they owned the dirt. Fishermen, soldiers, and merchants hastened homeward, giving a wide berth to the moist snouts and squeals of the herd.

Felix slowed his steps. Was he a fool for going where the dead were buried? The city officials could not bind his father with chains when his rage surfaced. They banished him to the tombs outside of town. Felix had to find his father and convince him to return home. Talking and pleading with a crazy person was his family's only hope. He counted between breaths to calm his clamoring heart.

A curious pig stopped and nuzzled Felix's ankle. The slick tongue nibbling at his flesh sent a shiver across his shoulders. Did the animal smell his bread? He shook his leg to ward off the small beast.

"Don't be afraid, boy." A farmer approached and urged the pig onward with a bushy-ended branch. "There's always a stray or two." The man glanced at Felix's bundle before resuming his trek. A whip and a knife hung from the man's leather belt. He showed no fear passing close to the caves where the demon possessed wasted away.

*Don't be afraid.* The stranger wouldn't say that if he knew where Felix was going with a loaf of bread smashed to his side. The farmer carried a weapon for protection. Felix cuddled baked grain.

"Gods of the wind and sea," Felix petitioned the advancing clouds, "you're bringing the cover of darkness. Now, bring my father out of the caves and heal his suffering."

The clomp of pig hooves and the shouts of laborers mocked his prayer.

He followed the herd until he veered off the main road. The farmers settled on the hillside for grazing, but he needed to search for his father among stone-carved graves.

Wind blew his thick curls into his face. Rain joined with the wind to sabotage his search. Why did a storm arrive tonight? The day showed no signs of bad weather. He shifted his gaze from the path to the

brush. Shadows from swaying cattails and the dip of a terebinth branch had his heart flinching, and his muscles poised for a retreat.

After a short climb, he pressed his back to a tree trunk and scanned the clearing in front of the tombs. Bones of dead people and shards of pottery littered the ground.

Would his father venture out in the rain? Or was he smart enough to stay dry in the caves? Felix's eyes stung, and not from the strain of trying to detect movement in the darkness. Was his mother right? Was life as he knew it finished? Was he an orphan at twelve years of age? Families buried their loved ones and mourned their loss. His family had nothing to bury. He hoped time remained to save his father and prevent a burial. Tonight was his last chance to seek the truth about his father's survival.

Felix shook his head. The tree branches drooped from their battle against the intensifying rain. He pulled the hood of his cloak tight to his face. Curse this storm! Water dripped from his forehead and trickled down his nose. His bread softened into mush beneath his arm. He couldn't stay hunched under a tree all night. He needed to act like the man of the house and locate his father before his mother claimed to be a widow.

Something glimmered in front of the farthest tomb. Links of chain lay near a rolled-away stone. Was it a sign? He stepped from the canopy of branches.

"I'm here, Father." The wind slapped his hood against his face. Could his father even hear his cries? He shouted louder. "It's Felix. Your son. Come out of the cave."

His throat burned as the cool rain moistened his lips. "Come out, Father. I brought you some bread."

The rain answered, intensifying its assault on the packed soil.

"Father, it's Felix." His heartbeat filled his ribcage. "I'm leaving. For good." He held the bundle of bread. Why should he care if the bread became crumbs? No one answered his pleas.

"Goodbye, Father. From me, from mother, from little Delphina." His eyes produced a storm of water all their own.

Someone hovered in the mouth of the far tomb.

“Father?” The name caught in his throat like a stubborn burr. He shivered ten times more than when the pig nuzzled his ankle.

A form stepped into the dim moonlight, tentative, like the skin covering its bones might evaporate in the rain. A shackle clung to a bony wrist. Links of chain hung almost to the ground. The man howled at the storm.

Something surged into Felix’s veins, prompting him to flee. But he couldn’t leave. This man, possibly his father, had come at his call. Had his father lost the ability to speak and only howled?

Felix answered in kind, howling like a sympathetic beast from the same pack.

The man knelt and gripped something with his hand. Cackling filled the clearing.

Felix backstepped toward the tree trunk. *Thunk*. Something hit the bark and splintered near his head. He jerked and ambled onto the path.

The man lumbered in his direction.

Father or not, Felix threw the bread at the tombs and freed his hands for a fight.

A chorus of shrieks and screams erupted from the man’s lips. His eyes glowed like fiery coals, illuminating the night. His expression did not harbor a father’s love, but a murderer’s hate.

Hope fled from Felix’s heart. He sprinted down the slick hillside toward the sea.

Eerie cackling followed after him, growing louder.

Any shred of the man he knew as his father had disappeared.

“Help! Help me.” He sought any god that would listen.