

The site of Kursi on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is identified with the land of Gerasenes, or, in some sources, Gadarenes or Gergesenes, where Jesus exorcised the devils of a demoniac named Legion (Luke 8:26-39; see also Matthew 8:28-34 and Mark 5:1-20). Excavations from 1970 to 1972 by the Israel Department of Antiquities unearthed a monastery at Kursi. It was surrounded by a wall that enclosed about 4 1/2 acres. An impressive road 25 feet wide led to the monastery church, which measured 82 feet by 147 feet. The church, seen in this view, was a basilica with geometric mosaics and medallions containing animals and birds. The apse is under the arch at left. Beneath the chapel (on the far side, at right) lay a crypt for burial of monks who had lived here. The monastery and church date from the late fifth or early sixth century. It was damaged in the brief Persian invasion of 614 C.E. and was finally destroyed and abandoned in the middle of the eighth century, probably as the result of the earthquake of 747. This view to the southeast shows the interior of the church with a workroom in the foreground. The room contains a restored olive press. Olive oil production was a common source of income for monasteries.

There is also a Tell Kursi on the shores of Galilee about 1/4 mile west of the monastery. The tell has not been excavated, but it appears to include an ancient wharf.