

Probably one of the most frequently visited places in modern Israel is the site of et-Tabgha, which is a corruption of the Greek name Heptapegon or "seven springs." The site lies on the northwest shores of the Sea of Galilee about 2 1/2 miles southwest of Capernaum. It is located at the foot of the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes. Tabgha is only two miles north and east of Magdala. It is the traditional site of the feeding of the 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes (Luke 9:10-17). The site of the multiplication was a "lonely place," and archaeological investigation of this immediate area shows that it was never inhabited. In the fourth century C.E., a church was built here to commemorate the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

In the second half of the fifth century C.E., a larger church was erected. It is this later church, now reconstructed, that contains in its southeast corner the large mosaic shown here under restoration. The odd cylinder with Greek letters on it is a Nilometer, by which one can measure the overflow of the Nile. It became a standard motif in ancient mosaics. Behind the workers in this slide stand reconstructed columns, bases with Greek crosses and Corinthian capitals (visible on top of the last column).