

Jordan River



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- The Jordan River is one of the most famous rivers in the world and is the principal river in Palestine.
 - The Jordan River is mentioned some 195 times in the Bible with the majority of references occurring in the Old Testament.
 - The average width of the riverbed is about 98 feet while the depth ranges from 3 to 10 feet. During flood times, the Jordan swells to a width of one-half mile in certain areas. From the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, only 65 air miles. But due to its many twists and turns, it is from 165 to 200 miles long.
 - Four sources from the Jordan River north of the Sea of Galilee.
 1. The first source is a stream that begins in Banias and issues from a cave. The stream is about six miles long.
 2. The second source is the Springs of Leddan, about four miles west of Banias.
 3. The third source begins on the west slopes of Mt. Hermon and is known as the Hasbani.
 4. The fourth source is the river Bareith which contains a beautiful waterfall.
 - Several rivers join the Jordan on its trip between the Sea of Galilee (690 feet above sea level) and the Dead Sea (1296 feet below sea level). Among the more familiar are:
 - The Yarmuk joins from the east just a few miles south of Galilee and nearly doubles the size of the Jordan.
 - Near Beth-Shean on the west the Jalud (Harod) where Gideon had his

men to drink so he could determine which ones to choose for his army.

Judges 7:1-8

- The Jabbok, which enters from the east, is where Jacob wrestled with the angel. **Genesis 32:22-31**

■ Although there were no bridges over the Jordan River until the time of the Romans, there were some fifty-four fords on the Jordan which were used in ancient times.

- The Jericho police searched for the Israelite spies all the way to the fords. **Joshua 2:7**
- Jacob crossed the “ford of the Jabbok.” **Genesis 32:22**
- David crossed the “fords of the wilderness.” **2 Samuel 15:28; 17:16, 22**

■ When Abraham and Lot separated, Lot chose the plain of Jordan. **Genesis 13:10**

■ It was referred to in the Bible as:

- A boundary and frontier. **Genesis 32:10; Numbers 34:10-12; Deuteronomy 3:20; 27:4; Joshua 1:2.**
- A military frontier. **Judges 7:24; 12:5**

■ **Numbers 22:1** — “And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.”

■ The tribes were numbered as they camped by the Jordan. **Numbers 26**

■ The Book of Joshua begins with God’s command to Joshua: “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.” **Joshua 1:2**

■ Before entering the promised land, Joshua and the Israelites came to Jordan (**Joshua 3:1**). God parted the waters to allow them to pass over into Canaan. **Joshua 3:13-17**

- **Joshua 3:16** — “That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.”
- One man from each of the twelve tribes took up a stone out of Jordan and later set them up for a memorial at Gilgal. **Joshua 4:1-18; 19-24**

■ After the Israelites had crossed over the Jordan River into the promised land (Canaan), they had to conquer seven different nations in order to possess the land.

1. Hittites
 2. Girgashites
 3. Amorites
 4. Canaanites
 5. Perizites
 6. Hivites
 7. Jebusites
- Before crossing the Jordan and dwelling near the brook Cherith where he was fed by ravens, Elijah warned Ahab about the coming drought. **1 Kings 17:1-7**
 - Elijah parted the waters of Jordan so that he and Elisha could pass over. **II Kings 2:7-8**
 - **2 Kings 2:8** — “And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.”
 - On the other side of the Jordan, Elisha asked Elijah for a double measure of his spirit and witnessed a chariot and horses of fire take Elijah into Heaven. **2 Kings 2:9-14**
 - On his return across the Jordan Elisha parted the waters. **2 Kings 2:13-14**
 - Naaman, a Syria general was cleansed of leprosy after dipping seven times in the Jordan River as he had been directed by Elisha. **2 Kings 5:1-14**
 - John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan River. **Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:2-14**
 - Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. **Matthew 3:13-17** (At least 7 sites have been claimed)
 - **John 1:29** — “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’”
 - John 3:23 indicates that John was baptizing at Aenon near Salim. “Aenon” means springs, and which springs are being referred to cannot be known for certain.
 - **Matthew 3:17** — “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

