



JORDAN RIVER

To the West, we find the Jordan River, whose source comes from several springs on the side and base of Mt. Hermon in the North. Beginning at an elevation of some 1,700 feet above sea level, the river flows to about 700 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee and then to the Dead Sea at 1,300 feet below sea level. It is the only river in the world which flows for most of its course below sea level. The river meanders through the Jordan valley some 200 nautical miles though only 65 miles as the crow flies.

The Jordan River is noted in the Bible as a place of cleansing and entrance into the Promised Land; it is symbolic of a place of crossing over into newness of life. The waters were held back so that Joshua and the Israelites could enter the land foretold to Moses and given to Abraham (Joshua 3). John the Baptist proclaimed the message of repentance and used the river to symbolize the washing away of sins (Matthew 3:11). Jesus was baptized in the Jordan as He began His ministry of grace and truth. At that divine moment we note the presence of the Trinity of God, the Father proclaiming the affirmation of the Son in the presence of the Holy Spirit seen as the descending Dove (Matthew 3:13-17).

In the days of the Prophet Elijah's disciple Elisha, the special benefits of immersing in the Jordan River first became known (2 Kings 5:10). Since John baptized Jesus in the Jordan, immersion in these waters has been a highlight of Holy Land pilgrimage. It has become a tradition to be baptized at Yardenit. Here, the water flows into the Jordan River, eventually flowing into the Dead Sea located more than 100KM to the south.

