

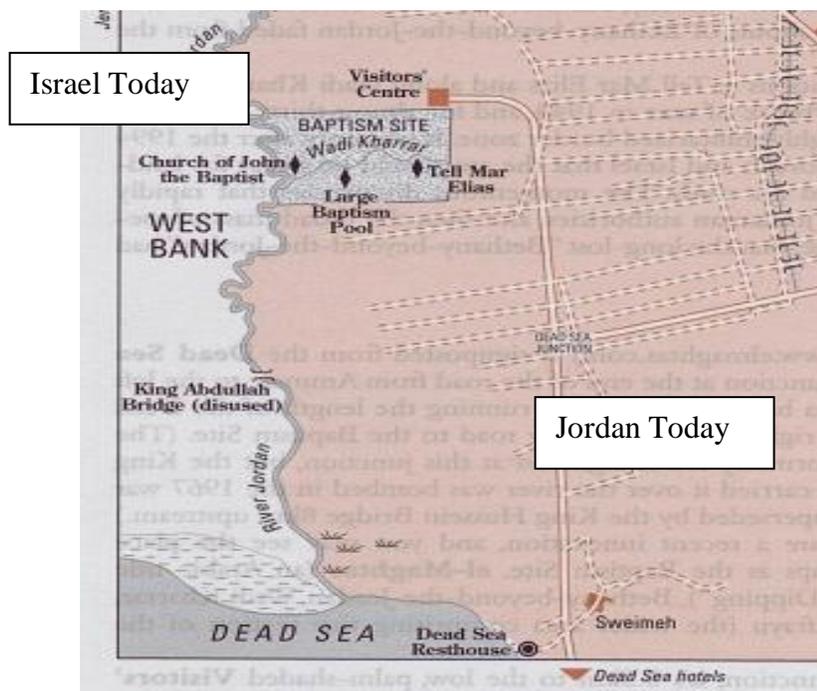
Walk Across the Holy Land



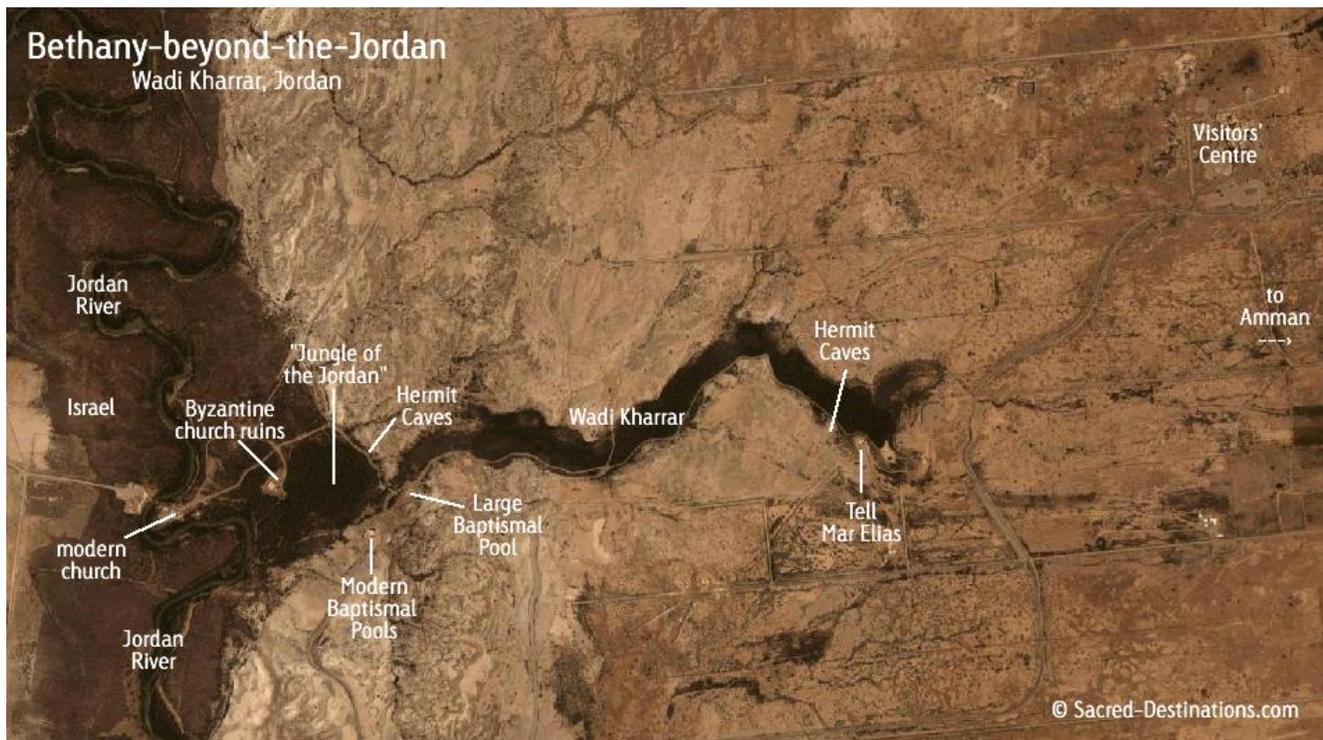
Start:

The public ministry of Jesus is thought to have begun at age 30, when he walked from Nazareth to the site of the baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea.

Although the identification is not absolutely certain, archaeology has shown that the area known as **Wadi Kharrar** is believed to be the biblical **Bethany-beyond-the Jordan**, where John the Baptist lived and Jesus was baptized.



This site was long off limits due to its position along a disputed border that was dotted with thousands of land mines. It was only in 1996, following the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty signed in 1994 and two years of clearing the mines, that archaeologists were able to excavate Wadi Kharrar. Archaeologists quickly uncovered an astounding number of ancient sites. These include: five baptismal pools (shallow pools lined with plaster) from the Roman and Byzantine periods; a Byzantine monastery; 11 Byzantine churches (including the Church of John the Baptist); caves of monks and hermits; and lodgings for pilgrims.



Aerial map of Wadi Kharrar and the Baptism Site

The Baptism Site is located in a desolate and difficult climate. It is nearly the lowest point on earth, at over 350m below sea level. The ground is dry and chalky and vegetation is sparse except on the banks of the Jordan River.



Entrance to the Baptism Site, Wadi Kharrar, at the Jordan River. Note the fences and Israel flag across the river (just left of the palm).



Modern Orthodox Church at Wadi Kharrar.



Sheltered ruins of the Church of John the Baptist at Wadi Kharrar



The Church (back) of John the Baptist

The Jordan River today is little more than a low muddy polluted stream. About 90 percent of the river's natural water flow has been diverted by Israel, Jordan, and Syria for domestic and agricultural use, with sewage flowing in its place.



The "jungle of the Jordan" and the now-small Jordan River, with the new Orthodox church in the distance.



Steps lead down to the Jordan River, where Israel is only a few feet away.

Biblical References:

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

16As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11

The Baptism of Jesus

9At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Luke 3:21-22

The Baptism of Jesus

21When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form

like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

John 1:28-34

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Jesus the Lamb of God

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

1st Destination Judean Desert:

Following his baptism, Jesus walked about 6 miles into the wilderness or desert in Judea, where he spent 40 days fasting, praying and confronting temptation. There the Devil tried three times to tempt Jesus to break his fast or compromise his mission.

Walk with Jesus 6 miles to the Judean Desert. When you arrive click on the 1st

Destination and receive your next packet.